

## Exam Preparation: Strategies for Essay Questions

1. Read Carefully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read instructions to find out if you can choose your essay, how many, and what should be included in your answer</li> <li>- Look for and circle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key terms (compare, describe, explain)</li> <li>• Conditions (main evidence for, two examples for)</li> <li>• Signal words (best, however, always, never)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Assess Time Expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The more marks, the more time should be set aside</li> <li>- General Rule of Thumb: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One point = one item of relevant information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. Record Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spontaneous ideas should be written down to trigger other ideas (tip: try a concept map)</li> </ul>
4. Start With an Easy One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start with the easiest question to build confidence and start your flow of ideas and writing</li> </ul>
5. Write a Simple Outline or Draw a Concept Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once you have organized your ideas, stick to the outline to avoid rambling and tangent writing</li> </ul>
6. Now Write	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't obsess about grammar, spelling and polished prose</li> <li>- Get your ideas down in short, information-laden sentences</li> </ul>
7. Avoid Lengthy Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Answer the essay question in the first sentence or two</li> <li>- If you have an original idea, include it in the first paragraph; you may forget it if you save it for the end</li> </ul>
8. One Idea per Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin and end the body of the essay with powerful points</li> <li>- Make sure the topic sentence of each paragraph is linked to the central question</li> <li>- Use transition words (but, what is more, while, however) between paragraphs</li> </ul>
9. Don't Personalize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't offer philosophical speculations or feelings unless specifically asked for</li> </ul>
10. Provide Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support and prove your argument with relevant examples</li> </ul>
11. Always Summarize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restate (in different words) the opening sentence(s)</li> </ul>
12. In Case of Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you have no time to write a complete essay, put your information down in point form; if there is no time for this, submit your original outline or concept map as your answer</li> </ul>
13. Go Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When you have finished, go back to polish</li> <li>- Clean up spelling, grammar, prose and add points you might have originally missed</li> </ul>